

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 OPR-02 A-01
/105 W

-----068837 211027Z /16

R 201535Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9174
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
US MISSION USUN NEW YORK 697
CINCEUR
AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 745

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINS, RM
SUBJC MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT REACTION TO ISRAEL MILITARY
ACTIONS IN SOUTH LEBANON

REF: A) 77 NOUAKCHOTT 2726

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED-SUMMARY: MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED
DAILY NEWSPAPER CHAAB, AFTER THREE DAYS OF RELATIVELY LOW KEY
ARAB NEWS AGENCY COVERAGE OF EARLIER PLO RAID, BEGAN FULL-SCALE,
FRONT-PAGE DUNUNCIATION OF ISRAELI COUNTER MEASURES ON MARCH 16
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WITH NEWS ACCOUNT OF ISRAELI CONTAINMENT, EDITORIAL CONDEMNING
ZIONIST ANNEXATION POOICIES AND FEATURED PHOTO OF PRESIDENT DADDAH
MARCH 15 AFTERNOON MEETING NOUAKCHOTT PLO REP ABOU ISSAM. ON MARCH 16
PLO REP WAS SEEN BY AMBASSADOR IN FONMIN FOUER APPARENTLY WAITING
FOR AUDIENCE WITH FONMIN MOUKNASS. END SUMMARY.

2.CHAAB LEAD ARTICLE, APPARENTLY BASED UPON PLO PRESS RELEASES

PLACED ISRAELI LOSSES AT OVER 300 DEAD, WITH TWO AIRPLANES AND SEVERAL TANKS DESTROYED. ACCOMPANYING EDITORIAL SPOKE OF FIERCE RESISTANCE OF PALESTINIANS TO OVER 25,000 INVADERS, AND CHARACTERIZED AGGRESSION AS DELIBERATE ISRAELI SABOTAGE OF PEACE INITIATIVES. EDITORIAL CONCLUDED WITH STATEMENT THAT MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT (GIRM) QUOTE CONDEMNS AS ALWAYS ANNEXATION POLICY OF ZIONIST STATE, REAFFIRMING ITS UNFAILING AND UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR STRUGGLE OF PALESTINE PEOPLE AND FOR ARAB COUNTRIES VICTIMS OF ISRAELI AGGRESSION.

MAURITANIA CONSIDERS ANY JUST AND EQUITABLE SOLUTION MUST INCLUDE REESTABLISHMENT LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND INTEGRAL RESTITUTION OF ALL OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES. END QUOTE.

3. SIMILAR STATEMENT OF SUPPORT ISSUED BY GREATER YOUTH COUNCIL AND ASSISTANT REGIONAL DELEGATE FOR PPM PARTY SECTION OF NOUAKCHOTT-KSAR. THUS FAR THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF HAS MADE NO PUBLIC STATEMENT ON FIGHTING, MEETING WITH PLO REP ON MARCH 15 BEING ONLY SHOW OF SUPPORT. IN ADDITION TO MEETING WITH PRESIDENT, PLO REP WAS SEEN BY AMBASSADOR ON FOLLOWING DAY APPARENTLY SEEKING AUDIENCE WITH FOMMIN MOUKNASS.

4. CITIZEN REACTION THUS FAR HAS BEEN LIMITED TO FAIRLY BRIEF ORDERLY TWO HOUR DEMONSTRATION IN FRONT OF NOUAKCHOTT PLO OFFICE. DEMONSTRATION, WHICH DISPERSED QUICKLY AFTER GIRM AUTHORITIES TOOK ONE LEADER INTO CUSTODY, WAS OF SUPPORT FOR PLO AND ANTI-ISRAEL. END UNCLASSIFIED
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5. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL-COMMENT; WHILE POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS ARE HARDLY REGULAR OCCURRENCES IN NOUAKCHOTT, EMBOFF WHO OBSERVED THIS DEMONSTRATION CHARACTERIZED SIZE AND EXCITABILITY OF CROWD AS FAR INFERIOR TO THAT ENGENDERED BY AUTO COLLISIONS WHICH OCCUR IN SAME AREA ALMOST DAILY. WHILE PLO REPS MAY NOT HAVE JOINED IN ACTION THEMSELVES, LOCATION OF RALLY AND USE OF BANNERS INDICATE SAME BEHIND-THE-SCENES ORGANIZATIONAL PARTICIPATION AS WAS APPARENT IN NOVEMBER 1977 DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST EGYPTIANS IN AFTERMATH OF ANNOUNCEMENT OF SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM (REPORTED REFTEL). CHAAB EDITORIAL, WHILE REITERATING GIRM AND MAURITANIAN PEOPLES SUPPORT OF STRUGGLE OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, POINTEDLY EXCLUDES REFERENCE TO PLO-A POSITION CONSISTENT WITH TON POSITION OF SENIOR GIRM OFFICIALS THAT ANY SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IS ACCEPTABLE TO GIRM.

6. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF THAT GIRM HAD BEEN AWARE OF DEVELOPING ANTI-ZIONIST DEMONSTRATION. HE NOTED THAT ONLY LOCAL TARGETS FOR DEMONSTRATORS COULD BE EGYPTIAN OR US EMBASSIES (WHICH ARE LOCATED 75 YARDS APART, NEXT TO PRESIDENTIAL OFFICES) AND STATED THAT PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH HAD PERSONALLY ORDERED MINISTER OF DEFENSE TO USE ARMY

TO CONTAIN AND DISPERSE DEMONSTRATORS SINCE HE HAD LESS CONFIDENCE IN LOCAL POLICE EFFECTIVENESS IN THIS SITUATION. KRYZA

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS, INVASIONS, REPRISALS, TERRORISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NOUAKC00745
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780124-0065
Format: TEL
From: NOUAKCHOTT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780347/aaaabnsr.tel
Line Count: 118
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: ec45f2c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 NOUAKCHOTT 2726
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3268722
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: C MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT REACTION TO ISRAEL MILITARY ACTIONS IN SOUTH LEBANON
TAGS: PEPR, PINS, PBOR, MR, PLO
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ec45f2c3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014